WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A data transfer method for executing data read/write between a center machine and a target machine which are connected via a communication line,

5   the center machine

preparing an e-mail in a predetermined format for read-out of data stored in the target machine, and

sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the target machine via the communication

10   line,

the target machine

analyzing the e-mail of the predetermined format received via the communication line,

reading out the data stored in the target machine

15   on the basis of an analysis result,

preparing an e-mail of a predetermined format, which contains the read-out data, and

sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the center machine via the communication

20   line, and

the center machine analyzing the e-mail of the predetermined format received from the target machine via the communication line, and obtaining data.

2. A data transfer method according to claim 1,

25   wherein said center machine is a personal computer.

3. A data transfer method according to claim 1, wherein said communication line is the Internet.

4. A data transfer method according to claim 1, wherein said e-mail of the predetermined format is described in an XML format.

5. A data transfer method according to claim 1, wherein said center machine and said target machine are provided with firewalls at connection stages with the Internet.

6. A data transfer method for executing data read/write between a center machine and a target machine which are connected via a communication line,

the center machine

preparing an e-mail in a predetermined format which contains data to be written in the target machine, and

sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the target machine via the communication line,

the target machine

analyzing the e-mail of the predetermined format received via the communication line,

storing the analyzed data in a predetermined area in the target machine,

preparing an ACK e-mail in a predetermined format when the data has been stored, and

sending the prepared ACK e-mail of the predetermined format to the center machine via the

communication line, and

the center machine analyzing the ACK e-mail of the predetermined format received from the target machine via the communication line, and confirming that data 5 has normally been written.

7. A data transfer method for executing data read/write between a center machine and a target machine which are connected via a communication line,

the target machine

10 preparing an e-mail in a predetermined format which contains notice information to be sent to the center machine, and

sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the center machine via the communication 15 line, and

the center machine

analyzing the e-mail of the predetermined format received from the target machine via the communication line, and

20 obtaining the notice information from the target machine.

8. A data transfer method for executing data read/write between a center machine and an image forming apparatus which are connected via a 25 communication line,

the center machine

preparing an e-mail in a predetermined format for

read-out of data stored in the image forming apparatus, and

sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the image forming apparatus via the Internet,

5   the image forming apparatus

analyzing the e-mail of the predetermined format received via the Internet,

reading out the data stored in the image forming apparatus on the basis of an analysis result,

10   preparing an e-mail of a predetermined format, which contains the read-out data, and

sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the center machine via the Internet, and

the center machine analyzing the e-mail of the

15   predetermined format received from the image forming apparatus via the Internet, and obtaining data.

9.   A data transfer method for executing data read/write between a center machine and an image forming apparatus which are connected via a

20   communication line,

the center machine

preparing an e-mail in a predetermined format which contains data to be written in the image forming apparatus, and

25   sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the image forming apparatus via the Internet,

the image forming apparatus

analyzing the e-mail of the predetermined format received via the Internet,

storing the analyzed data in a predetermined area in the image forming apparatus,

5   preparing an ACK e-mail in a predetermined format when the data has been stored, and

sending the prepared ACK e-mail of the predetermined format to the center machine via the Internet, and

10   the center machine analyzing the ACK e-mail of the predetermined format received from the image forming apparatus via the Internet, and confirming that data has normally been written.

10.   A data transfer method for executing data
15   read/write between a center machine and an image forming apparatus which are connected via a communication line,

the image forming apparatus

preparing an e-mail in a predetermined format
20   which contains notice information to be sent to the center machine, and

sending the prepared e-mail of the predetermined format to the center machine via the Internet, and

the center machine

25   analyzing the e-mail of the predetermined format received from the image forming apparatus via the Internet, and

obtaining the notice information from the image forming apparatus.